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The  
William Davison  
School

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A  
HISTORY  
of  
THE  
WILLIAM DAVISON  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
Worthing

with particular reference to  
two outstanding personalities.

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PREFACE

I wish to make warm acknowledgement to the William Davison Church of England High School for Girls for making available to me their school records and archives. Especially I would like to thank Mrs. McLoughlin, the Headmistress, for her kind and helpful comments.

My thanks are also due to the Parents National Educational Union for making available to me their archives, in which were found several letters of Charlotte Mason's, previously thought to have been destroyed by her request at her death. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Mr. D.R. Ellery of the Worthing Reference Library, Miss Joan Gibbs of London University and Mr. J. Hewson of the Charlotte Mason College of Education, who so kindly lent me several of Miss Mason's books to read, and the many others who have given me most valuable assistance.

Valerie Hetzel.

INTRODUCTION

In 1837 Lord Brougham taunted the House of Lords with the 'opprobrium of having done less for the Education of the People than any one of the more civilized nations of the world'(1)

In many ways his observations were justified. Today in the 1970's nobody questions the right of a child to education, but before 1870 it was left to the Voluntary Societies and to private individuals. The availability and quality of schools varied enormously from area to area. Often the provision of a school depended on the willingness of local residents to undertake the fund raising and organisation necessary to establish one. Moreover, there was disagreement as to the desirability and purpose of education. A great variety in the standard of teaching and the content of the curriculum existed. In many district the only school which existed was attached to the Church of England. Many parents did not send their children to school, either because they could not afford the fees or because they were needed to work.

However, this dissertation also seeks to show that the availability of education depended not only on one's religion, financial status or place of residence, but in addition on the influence in a locality of an exceptional personality, whose interest and drive led to the creation

of educational facilities better than those available elsewhere.

Worthing in the nineteenth century was fortunate enough to have had the benefit of the work of two such personalities, Charlotte Mason and William Davison. Moreover, it was the same school which came under their influences, known today as the William Davison Church of England High School for Girls.

Chapter 1.

Worthing c.1812 and the founding of the Free Schools.

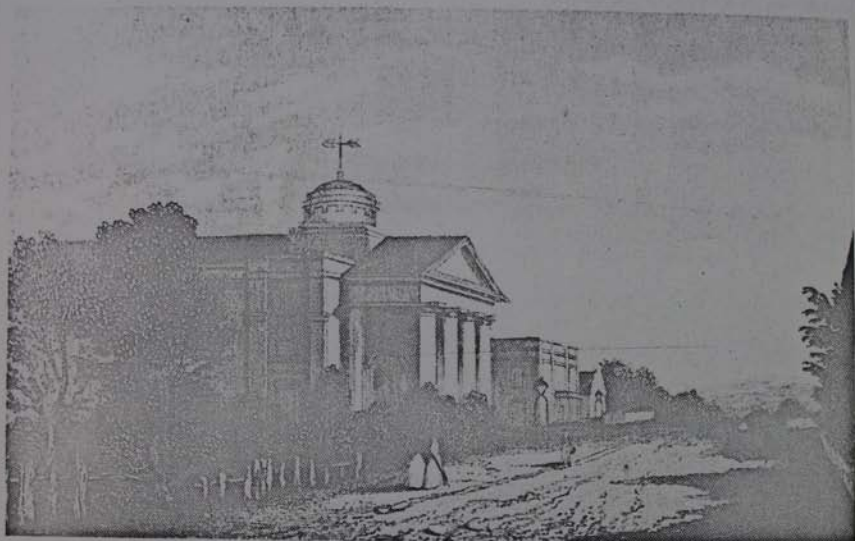
The story of the <sup>W</sup>illiam Davison High School for Girls really has its roots in the development of Worthing from a small fishing hamlet into a thriving seaside resort.

In fact very little is known about Worthing before the start of the nineteenth century, partly because it had no parochial history of its own, being part of the parish of Broadwater a village about one mile to the north, and partly because before seabathing became fashionable, and Brighton in particular, Worthing had little to attract people. An early guide to the area describes Worthing as formerly being "a few miserable fishing huts and smugglers' den". (1) However, the growth of the seabathing industry affected Worthing; boarding houses and summer residences were built and the small hamlet started to become fashionable, especially after Princess Amelia, the youngest daughter of George III paid a visit to it lasting five months in 1798.

By 1803 Worthing had grown sufficiently in importance to be granted the title of town. An Act of Parliament was passed that appointed Commissioners for the running of the town and ruling that "the said hamlet of Worthing shall henceforth be and be called and described THE TOWN OF WORTHING". (2)

However, despite its civic independence Worthing was still part of the ecclesiastical parish of Broadwater and its permanent population must still have been very small, for the first National Census figures of 1801 state that the total population of Broadwater

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The Chapel of Ease, Worthing, c 1812.

(from Collection of Prints and Etchings, Worthing Reference Library)

and Worthing together was only 1,018. (3)

Nevertheless, Worthing merited mention in guide books of the period, one of which describes the resort thus: (4)

"Worthing is in the Parish of Broadwater, a village about the distance of half a mile, which now looks contemptible when contrasted with the growing splendour of its dependant ..... There are three respectable libraries and at Spooners and Staffords newspapers and magazines are regularly received every morning and evening. Wicke's warm baths and Bloss's boarding house are singularly comfortable. There are two respectable banks, and at Philips and other Wine vaults, the best spirits, wines and bottled malt liquors may be had in perfection. There is an excellent theatre, billiard rooms and other amusements ...."

Worthing continued to flourish. The newly appointed Commissioners were permitted to raise a rate to level and pave the streets, provide lamps and purchase an engine for the 'extinguishing of fires.' (5)

In 1807 a theatre was opened under the management of Thomas Trotter, later to manage the Theatre Royal in Brighton; and many famous actresses and actors of the day were to appear on its stage.

Further proof of Worthing's growing fame as a fashionable resort was marked by the stay during 1807 of the Princess Charlotte, the daughter of the Prince Regent.

Nevertheless, any illustrious visitor who wished to attend services of the Church of England still could not do so in the town. They had to make the journey to the village of Broadwater. But this was soon remedied. In 1809 an Act of Parliament was passed to authorise the building of the Chapel of Ease. (7) That is to say, not a separate church with its own parish, but

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The Reverend William Davison, MA.

(from: Church of St. Paul Chapel Road. Jefferson)

a Chapel under the auspices of the Parish Church was to be erected in Worthing. This would save worshippers the inconvenience of travelling to Broadwater.

The Chapel of Ease was completed in 1812 and on September 18th of that year it was consecrated by the Bishop of Chichester.(8) The building of the Chapel had been paid for by a fund raised by public subscription. In order to raise enough money to pay for the building costs and for the upkeep of the Chapel the actual pews in the Chapel were sold to wealthy inhabitants or to summer residents. The pews cost between £150. and £500. each depending on their position. An annual rate was also levied. An office was set up in the town to deal with these negotiations.(9) A few pews were reserved to be rented by the day and the charge for this was 1s. or 1s. 6d. - a sum which was well beyond the means of the average labourer. Only the sick were permitted in free.<sup>i</sup> So in effect, the Chapel was for the convenience of the wealthy, the ordinary townsfolk still having to make the journey to Broadwater.

However, it was the members of this Chapel of Ease, who seemed to have been little concerned with the spiritual welfare of the ordinary townsfolk, who were to set up schools for their children. In particular it was the Curate of the Chapel who was to become deeply involved with the education of the poorer classes in the town.

The Reverend William Davison had been appointed as Perpetual Curate to the Chapel of Ease a little before its

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Footnote:

i. Later the children of the National Schools shared this concession.

## Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Parish

A MEETING of the INHABITANTS of this Parish having taken place in the Town of WORTHING on Monday the nineteenth of October, 1819, for the purpose of founding an establishment for gratuitously educating in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic, and in the Christian Religion according to the principles of the Established Church, and instructing in some useful handicraft, the Poor Male Children of the Parish.

*The Reverend PETER WOOD in the Chair.*

It was resolved that a Committee be constituted for carrying into effect the intentions of the Meeting, and the following Gentlemen were appointed a Committee, *the Reverend Peter Wood, the Reverend William Davison, Edward Watt, Miles Stringer, Michael Morrah, John Wakefield, James Hopkins, Joseph Watts, and Edward Wardroper.*

That the Reverend Peter Wood, Rector, be appointed President, and the Reverend William Davison Vice President of the Committee.

That the Reverend William Davison be appointed Treasurer.

That Mr. Watts be appointed Secretary.

That the Committee be empowered to extend the Benefit of this Institution to the Female Children of the Parish, as soon as sufficient Funds shall be raised for that purpose.

That the Funds necessary for defraying the expence of this Establishment be raised by voluntary Donations and Subscriptions.

*Peter Wood,*

PRESIDENT.

The Committee having in consequence of the authority delegated to them, engaged a School Room, and purchased some attached Buildings well adapted for the purpose of Work Shops, &c. and having ascertained by estimate, that the expence of fitting up and completing the purchase of the same will amount to £120.

And having also the Annual expences to provide for, request the assistance of a liberal public to enable them to carry into effect so desirable an undertaking.

Donations and Subscriptions will be received by the Committee.

consecration. He could not have been in Worthing long before he started to think about a school. Maybe the "swarms of children that are daily to be met in the streets, the obscene language of some of them, and the neglect of their parents" (10) influenced him. Whatever the reason, one month after the Chapel was consecrated a meeting was called to discuss the idea. This meeting was held on October 19th and it was resolved to 'found an establishment for gratuitously educating in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, and in the Christian Religion according to the principles of the Established Church, the Poor Male Children of the Parish'.(11)

At this meeting, the Rector of the Parish was made president of the Committee appointed to carry out the work and the Reverend William Davison was appointed Vice-President and Treasurer. A Mr. Watts was appointed Secretary.

The Committee was empowered to raise funds for the proposed school by voluntary donations and subscriptions, and also, when finance permitted, the benefits of the 'Institution' were to be extended to 'female children'.

It is notable that no charge was to be made to the parents of the children. The school was to be financed by donations collected from the visitors and residents, some of whom became 'patrons' subscribing a guinea a year. Although a free school was not unique, more often a small charge was made. Perhaps 2d. a week. It was generally thought that the poor would only appreciate education if they had to pay for it. The National Society<sup>(1)</sup> definitely recommended payment.(12)

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(1) The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church - usually referred to simply as The National Society, by which title it will be referred to in this work.

The organisers of the meeting of the 19th October must have been very confident that their project would be acceptable. Already the Reverend Davison had started to raise money. On the previous Sunday he had preached a Charity Sermon in the Chapel of Ease in aid of funds for the proposed school, and had persuaded the Duchess of Lonsdale to stand at the door collecting donations. The not inconsiderable sum of £70. was received.(13)

It is interesting to note how successful this method of raising funds was. An account in the form of a diary written of a visit to Worthing by Horace Smith during this period, gives this description: (14)

"Sunday - Chapel of Ease, Sermon for the Benefit of two free Schools. Plates held by Lady Seraphina and Earl of Elderbury. Happened to go out at Lady Seraphina's door. Meant to give only one shilling, but plate being held by a dame of quality, could not give less than half-a-crown." (i)

The school was set up immediately. A footnote on a handbill reporting the result of the meeting which set up the Committee to establish the School, states that a School Room had been acquired and some attached buildings purchased which were suitable for workshops.(15) The cost of purchasing and fitting up was estimated to be £130. More money to meet these costs was raised by a collection taken at the Theatre, Worthing on October 30th after the evening performance. By then the school was already in existence. The playbill for this performance refers to the "FREE SCHOOL

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(i) footnote: This extract from an article by Horace Smith called 'A Visit to Worthing' was first published in 1822. It probably refers to a visit c 1817, as later this method of collecting fell into abeyance.

lately established".(16)

The school appears to have been held in an old building in Cook's Row - no longer in existence, which was off the present High Street. An old resident and founder pupil talking at the turn of the century remembers the school as being tumbled down and in an "old barn with a thatched roof, standing at the end of a small garden."(17) The resident was probably right in remembering it as old, but it would seem that it was formerly a barracks and not a barn. A guide to Worthing published about 1813 mentions the Free School established in the High Street, but in "the former barracks" (18). If these barracks are the same ones as mentioned in yet an earlier guide, they were certainly tumbled down, for in 1811 they were written of thus: (19)

"The barracks are a disgrace to Worthing, and the sooner they are pulled down the better. They resemble more a dog kennel than a place of human habitation."

That the building used was the old barracks is also more consistent with other recollections that the first school building had a bell on top.(20) This feature would seem more in keeping with a barracks than a barn.

However, whatever the state of the building about two hundred boys were expected to attend (21)"with hands and faces washed and hair cut short and combed" (22). This extract is taken from the "Rules and Instructions to be observed by Parents of Children admitted into Worthing Free School",

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which also includes details of when to attend etc. besides instructions to the parents to "pay proper attention to the language and behaviour of their children when at home - to give them good advice, and set them a good example - remembering that they will be answerable to Almighty God if they neglect this important duty." (23)

The Instructions also mention that free medical advice and medicine was available to the boys of the School from the local physician, Mr. Morrah. Unfortunately, this concession seems to have been abused for in 1816 a further notice states that it is to be withdrawn owing to the nuisance and trouble which was caused. (24)

The children were to attend school at nine in the morning and at two in the afternoon every weekday - which included Saturdays - and on Sunday they were also to assemble in order to go in procession to the Chapel of Ease or to the Parish Church. Later, when a school was started in Broadwater itself the children from the Worthing School only attended the Chapel of Ease. The Trustees of the Chapel agreed that the school children should be allowed in free, and also that selected children from the school should provide the choir and open the pews for the worshippers. For providing the choir the school was to be paid five guineas per annum. (25)

Shortly after the opening of the school the Committee again appealed for funds, and a printed address circulated at the time enables us to see some of the aims and philosophy behind the opening of the school. The following longish extract is quoted because it reflects more fully than any

resumé what the aims and philosophy were(26)

"...The British Nation can only derive the transcendently elevated rank which it holds, among so many rivals of its opulence and its glory, and which rises more and more conspicuous, as each successive year adds to its achievements and to its resources, from the energy and activity which a superior degree of cultivation confers on a population comparatively inconsiderable. It is in the education of the humblest and most numerous parts of the community, that the means of still further improving this cultivation must be sought, and fortunately the new methods of instruction; which have been so generally introduced for this purpose, present the happiest expedient for meeting, in the most effectual manner, the increasing calls of the state on the powers and faculties of its members ..." (i)

It is interesting to see how nearly a speech made almost sixty years later, reflects the points of view put forward in this address. W.E.Forster, the Liberal Politician, when introducing the debate in Parliament on his Elementary Education Act of 1870 said "Upon the speedy provision of elementary education depends our industrial prosperity....the safeguarding of our constitutional system"..and "...our political power. Civilized communities throughout the world are massing themselves together; and if we are to hold our position among men of our own race or among the nations of the world we must make up for the smallness of our numbers by increasing the intellectual force of the individual." (27)

The address for the school goes on to state that the Committee believed that it was the duty of the private individual to provide facilities for the education of the poor and similar charitable institutions, and that it was a matter of pride that the private individual puts into effect the objects of civil government.

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(i) For complete version, see appendix A.

The school seems to have flourished during the first year, although we have little documentary evidence from this period. All that survives are the few handbills already mentioned, one or two others informing parents of the date the school was to reassemble after holidays and one to asking them to be sure to notify the reason for absence as soon as possible. However, if we again turn to the Guides of the period, we find the writers commenting that "the newly established Free School has had the good effect of clearing the streets of all the unruly children, so much complained of by visitants".(28)

Moreover, the accounts published a little later show that although £22. was spent on books and £36. was paid as salary to the schoolmaster, income exceeded expenditure.(29) The income from the collections for the School in the Chapel of Ease alone amounted to £222.16.0d. (i)

During 1813 the Reverend Davison had been in touch with the National Society to request that the School be united with it. He also requested and received a grant of £100. A grant of the same amount was also received from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. However, the money received from these grants may have been put towards financing the Girls' School, which, in accordance with the

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(i) The Chapel of Ease Offertory Book lists three collections for the school during the first year:

October 18. 1812	£70.
August 8 1813	71. 7. 6.
" 26 "	81. 8. 6.    £222. 16. 0d.

In addition to these collections there would have been the donations by the Patrons and gifts from visitors to the school.

was to be opened in June 1815 in an old barn on the outskirts of the town. Within three years of the first boys' school being opened in Worthing the scheme was extended to include girls. In three years three - hundred and fifty free places for the education of the poor had been provided.

Throughout England this was an era of expansion and change as far as education for the poor was concerned. A growing population, agricultural change, the growth of towns and the dissemination of new ideas had given rise to political unrest, class strife and fears of revolution. Some people, especially amongst the middle classes, felt that education represented a potential stabilising influence over the working classes. Opinion was divided as to how this should be done, if education should be extended to all of the working class, and whether or not the State should be involved.

That the Government of the early nineteenth century were so slow to accept any responsibility for education was partly because of their unwillingness to assume new burdens; partly because of the conflict of opinion which sprang into being at the mention of education, and partly because education was so closely linked with the question of religious teaching, where fresh controversies bristled at each breath of reform. Nevertheless, while Parliament deliberated two groups dedicated to the principle of education for working class children were to emerge. These two groups became the British and Foreign School Society, founded in 1814 and the National Society for the Promotion of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, founded in 1811. The name of the later society speaks for itself. The former was its rival in that it stood for training children

not in the principles of the Church of England, but of dissent. During the first half of the nineteenth century many schools were opened and partly financed by these two societies.

The National Society was by far the larger of the two. Its objective was not to adapt people to the new conditions, but to maintain the status quo - to educate people "to that state in life into which it was pleased God to call them".(30) It was at once a movement to redeem an apathetic church, to indoctrinate an illiterate populace in the principles of the Church of England, and to protect the social order.

The National Society was naturally the organisation to which the school set up by the Church of England Chapel-of-Ease belonged. However, belonging to the Society did not necessarily mean the acceptance of all its aims. Notwithstanding the inclusion in the curriculum of the 'learning of a suitable trade'(31), it would appear from the Address circulated by Davison and his Committee(i) that they believed education was necessary for the advancement of the whole community. Education was not for the preservation of the status quo, but essential if the nation was to continue to expand. They believed that education should be free, unlike the National Society who recommended a fee (32). They thought it essential that all members of the community should receive education. A view not in accord with many sections of society. Mrs. Trimmer (ii) stated "However desirable it may be to

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i. See page 8.

ii. Sarah Trimmer (1731-1810) was an early pioneer of the Sunday School Movement, authoress of a series of tracts and lesson books for children, and editress of the "Guardian of Education. She exerted considerable influence.

rescue the lower kinds of people from that deplorable state of ignorance in which the greatest part of them were for a long time to remain, it cannot be right to train them all." (33)

So, by 1815 Davison and his Committee had set up in Worthing Institutions in many ways in advance of then current educational thought. Davison himself was to take an active interest in these schools for the next thirty-five years, raising funds, taking weekly lessons and acting as Manager. It was also to be due to William Davison that so many other educational innovations were to be made in Worthing.

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Chapter 2Development of Schools until death of William Davison.

At the end of 1815 both the Girls' and the Boys' School were well established. Although these are referred to as separate schools, it would appear that in many ways they were two departments of the same institution. They were run by the same Committee, financed by the same fund, the curriculum was similar and they were both organised on the monitorial system.(i) Moreover, in 1817 or 1818 the Boys' School moved from their original site to buildings adjoining the Girls' School at the north of the town.(ii) Later the Boys' School was to move again, and the Girls' School took over their premises. William Davison was Manager of both Schools and it was only after his death that their ways tended to diverge. While he was alive they were to thrive and many other innovations were to be made in Worthing.

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(i) The monitorial or mutual method of instruction was the system whereby a whole school could be run by one teacher in one room. The information for each lesson was given by the teacher to various older pupils called monitors. Each monitor then returned to his appointed group of schoolfellows and did his best to convey to it what had been crammed into him.

(ii) Although the addresses of the schools are different, the Boys' Chapel Road, the Girls' North Street, the two roads form a right-angle at the site of the school. See map.

In 1817, an Evening School was opened at the Boys' School in the High Street. This school was specially set up to teach young men, who had not had the opportunity when they were younger, to learn to read the Bible. When a young man could read the New Testament 'correctly' (1) he was presented with his own Bible, and after this, if he so wished, he could join classes in writing and arithmetic. As in the other schools, no charge was made. The school was supported out of funds collected in the town. It was held from 6-o'clock to 8-o'clock every evening except Saturday, but including Sundays when presumably the pupils attended Church.(1)

A Netting School was also opened at this time.(2) Unfortunately very little can be found out about this enterprise. It seems to have been a separate institution from the Boys' School, although it was held in the same building. Perhaps in the Workshops mentioned in early handbills. The purpose of the school was to teach older boys to make fishing nets - a reflection of the importance of the fishing industry to Worthing during this period. This school was financed by the Fund for the Industrious Poor. Their accounts published on April 30th 1817 state they paid £118. 6s. 7d. to the School, including £84. 3s. 4d. for twine and £27. 2s. 9d. to the boys and master for their work. The boys received payment for their work according to the quantity of net they made, and in order to encourage "Thrift and Industry", they were paid by tickets

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(1) See handbill opposite. "Correctly" probably meant technically being able to read a passage. It is unlikely to have implied any depth of understanding or interpretation.

which could be exchanged for cash once a Quarter only. (3)

By 1824 this school seems to have amalgamated with the Boys' School. No further accounts or handbills appear and the Boys' School curriculum specifically mentions that netmaking lessons are available.(4)

However, the four schools; Boys', Girls, Evening and Netting, did not satisfy the educational aspirations of William Davison. For sometime during 1817 two Infant Schools were opened.(i) Very little is known about the early days of these schools. This is unfortunate because they may have been the first infant schools in England or even in Great Britain. A plaque erected later on the wall of the Infant School stated:

Worthing and Broadwater Infantine Schools were established in 1817, and were the first established in England.

Westminster Infantine School was established in 1819 and the Spitafields School in 1820.

Lord Brougham and the Bishop of London have frequently, both in Parliament and elsewhere complimented each other as the originators of these institutions. If there be any merit in such matters, let it be given to whom it is due namely the inhabitants of Worthing and Broadwater.

"Render to all their dues"

Whether or not Worthing residents were justified in making this claim in hard to establish. Most educational historians

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- (i) A third Infant School was opened at Broadwater at the sametime. One fund financed all three schools.
  - (ii) This plaque is quoted in various Guides of the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's. Unfortunately it is not known what happened to it. It may have been destroyed when the Infant School building was demolished in 1926.

credit Robert Owen with setting up the first Infant School in Great Britain at his famous New Lanark factory in 1816. However, Brougham and Wilderspin (whose patron was the Bishop of London) dismissed this establishment as not being an ordinary school. It was set up to serve the children of employees at Robert Owen's factories. They also claimed the children followed no particular curriculum. This allegation presumably stems from the fact that in an age when most people believed that education should properly consist of the three R's plus religion, Owen considered education "according to nature would produce full-formed men and women". This was seen by his detractors as being "merely play". (5)

However, the school opened in 1818(i) by Brougham also did not have a systematic plan or curriculum. In fact it was run by a former New Lanark Schoolmaster, and at first it was called "The Westminster Free Day Infant Asylum".(6)

Wilderspin and the Bishop of London opened their school at Spitalfields, as the plaque mentions, in 1820. Therefore, as claimed, Worthing Infant Schools were opened well before Westminster and Spitalfields.

Whether or not Worthing can claim to have had the first Infant School in Great Britain would seem to rest on the acceptance of New Lanark as an Infant School or not. No definite claim can be made for Worthing based on having a 'proper curriculum', but as it was joined to the National Society it is likely that some formal teaching took place.(ii)(7)

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(i) The Westminster School was opened in 1818 not 1819 as stated on the Worthing plaque.

(ii) One of the advantages of joining the National Society was that it supplied sample curriculum, texts and books.

Also, school places were available to children living in the Parish, they did not have to be the children of employees at a particular factory.

However, whatever the merits of these various claims, the Worthing Schools were certainly very early examples of Infant educational establishments. Generally speaking the Infant School Movement did not get started until the mid to late 1820's.

In Worthing, the children who attended these early Infant Schools were aged between two to six years, they then transferred to the separate Boys' or Girls' departments. In 1818 there were 150 pupils on the registers of the two Infant Schools and ten years later a Mr. John Tidey wrote of them: (i)(8)

... "the infant of the very poorest may now turn, as it were, even from the mother's breast, to smile at the fostering hand of benevolence ready to receive it, and stepping from the maternal knee, with a lisping tongue, commence the march of intellect. The method of setting the first lessons, even the alphabet and arithmetical tables to simple airs in music appears to be as happy as it is novel, and that which was irksome to little children, becomes a delightful task ..." (ii)

Mr. Tidey was wrong in assuming that the methods used in the school were unique. During the late 1820's and in the 1830's singing or chanting was often used to teach the alphabet tables. In fact Wilderspin used this method. (iii) But these Infant Schools were a breakaway from the Dame Schools Tidey mentions previously in his article. These establishments hardly merited the name of school and much

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(i) John Tidey was the father of Edward Tidey the well-known Victorian Artist. John Tidey also ran a private school for Boys in Worthing. There is a Tidey J. listed as a monitor in the Boys Free School Register 1814, but it is not known if this is the same person. He would be about the same age.

(ii) and (iii) This method was in fact developed into the

criticism appeared of them, both in Parliament and in articles. Several Dame Schools existed in Worthing and Tidey mentions that they were often in the control of 'infirm females'. (i)

However, if we do not know much about the Infant Schools we do know a little more about the Girls' and Boys departments. The Register for the Boys' School covering the period 1814-1815 is still in existence and this gives us quite a lot of detail as to organisation and curriculum as well as to attendance. (9)

Both the Boys' and the Girls' Schools were organised on a mixture of the Lancaster and Bell systems. (ii) (10) The systems had much in common. Both used older children as monitors and by breaking the learning process down into the smallest possible steps hoped that one master would be able to supervise up to a thousand children. However, it was not necessary for the master or mistress of the Worthing schools to teach a thousand children at once. Although on occasion over one hundred children were present.

The early register shows us that the Boys' School was divided into eight classes and lists two monitors for each one. It also lists monitors whose duties were 'cleaning', and looking after 'confined scholars'. It is not known exactly how old these monitors were, but generally it was unusual for children to stay at school beyond the

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"simultaneous system". That is to say when the whole class is taught at the same time, not in separate groups as under the Monitorial System.

(i) 'Infirm Females' may refer to imbecility, senility or physical handicap. Dame Schools frequently seem to have been run by people unable to take up any other occupation. (11)

(ii) The systems take their names from Joseph Lancaster and Dr. Bell, respectively. Both claim to have invented the monitorial system in the early nineteenth century. The

age of ten. When the children left school they were helped to find employment, usually in trade or service. If the child had not got "decent garments" to wear to his new job these were provided by the School out of the fees paid to it for providing the Choir at the Chapel.

However, not only their material being was looked after. On leaving School the children were given a Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

Each class listed in the Register contained from ten to seventeen children, and the curriculum varied as they progressed up the School. For instance, Class 6's daily work included Bible Reading twenty five minutes, Writing two hours, Cyphering (subtraction) two hours, and Catechism Book half an hour. Hymns, Psalms and the Abridged Version of the Bible were also studied daily. When the children were in class seven they studied the Miracles, Chanted Hymns and learned Division, as well as the usual Bible Reading and Writing. The children certainly seemed to have worked hard in their schools. Besides being expected to attend seven days a week few holidays are recorded. Indeed, at first, no regular school terms were established. During some years a short break seems to have been taken during the Summer and a week after Christmas, but the children went to school on Christmas Day (presumably to attend Church). No holiday is recorded over the Easter period. As the years progressed terms got more regular, but it was still usual to work forty-six weeks of the year! (11)

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main difference was in organisation. Lancaster arranged his desks in rows across the room, Bell in rows down the side, leaving the middle open. In this space the pupils stood for oral lessons. However, there were many variations. Bell favoured slates, Lancaster sandtrays for writing. Bell was connected with the National Society. Lancaster with British and Foreign Schools Society.

## HYMN XVII.

(SHIRLAND.)

*School Charity Hymn.*

From Thee, our bounteous God,  
We ev'ry good receive;  
Thou giv'st us clothing, friends, and food,  
And by thy grace we live.

Thy pitying eye beheld  
How we in darkness lay;  
From Thee this Institution came,  
That we might read and pray.

O let us greatly prize  
The kind instructions given;  
For now we read thy Holy Book,  
That guides our feet to heav'n.

O may thy Spirit bless  
This learning to our gain!  
And may our patrons and our friends  
A large reward obtain!

May we and they, at last,  
At thy right hand appear;  
And, when the toils of life are past,  
All meet in glory there.

Hymns 48 and 49 from the Chapel of Ease Private Hymn Book,  
first published 1618.

## HYMN XVIII.

(CAMBRIDGE.)

*Infant School Charity Hymn.*

Thou Guardian of our infant days,  
To Thee our pray'rs ascend:  
To Thee we'll tune our songs of praise—  
To Thee, the Children's Friend.

From Thee our daily mercies flow,  
Our life and health descend:  
Lord, save our souls from sin and woe,  
Be Thou the Children's Friend.

Teach us to prize thy Holy Word,  
And to its truths attend:  
Thus shall we learn to fear the Lord,  
And love the Children's Friend.

Lord, draw our youthful hearts to Thee,  
From ev'ry ill defend:  
Help us in early life to flee  
To Thee, the Children's Friend.

Oh may we taste of Jesus' love,  
To him our souls commend:  
For Jesus left the realms above,  
To be the Children's Friend.

Let all our hopes be fix'd on high.  
And when our lives shall end,  
Then may we live above the sky  
With Thee, the Children's Friend.

Nevertheless, life was not all work for the children. The Diaries of M. Sewin who had a son at the school, tell us that on various occasions the children had the day off to beat the boundaries of the Parish. National events such as Waterloo were celebrated with bonfires and picnics.(12) On Mid-Summers Day they all went in procession behind the Town Cryer and the Civic Dignitaries - 'with flowers in their button holes and blue ribbons in their hats' to a service in the Chapel-of-Ease. Afterwards they all went to a field nearby where the children were given pennies and plum buns.

The children also continued to attend the Chapel each Sunday, and in 1818 a gallery was built to seat them. Six girls joined the boys in forming the choir. These children were provided with special clothing - surplices for the boys and grey dresses for the girls. (13) After school on Friday they had choir practice and the hymn book specially compiled for the Chapel members still survives. It only contains thirty four hymns in order that all members of the congregation could learn them. Included amongst the hymns are some especially for the children of the Free Schools.

When actually in school, it seems as though the children found themselves in a room typical of the period. The Boy's School at least is in keeping with the recommendations of the National Society. A handbill titled 'Sections of the Free School' shows that the main room allowed roughly seven square feet of floor space per pupil.(14) A raised platform was at one end from where the schoolmaster could view each class, supervised by the class monitors.

However, the furniture was more typical of the Lancaster system. Long narrow tables, rising in height as the children grew bigger, narrow stools and little room between the rows. There was also a sandtray, presumably used for drawing the outlines of letters, an alphabet wheel 4 ft. in diameter and a telegraph. This later was a large number board on which was put the number of pupils present. However, conditions were probably not as crowded as would at first appear. Usually more than half the children on the Register were absent, and often as many as three-quarters.

The difficulty to get the children to attend was to be a continuous problem, and one which was national. Many debates in Parliament and other local school records show how widespread this problem was. In Worthing attendance fluctuated with the season. In summer boys were required to help with the harvest and girls were needed to assist with the summer visitors. Only a few children are recorded absent for any reason other than "work". One or two are regularly marked "truant" and a very few "ill". The uncertainty of human life at this time is also reflected by the entries 'died'.

However, despite the fluctuation in numbers, Worthing children were better provided with schooling than most of their contemporaries. Various Select Committees to investigate the Education of the Lower Orders had been set up by Parliament since 1810. In 1818 the then Committee on Education circularized all Parishes in England as to the number of schools in their area. From the answers given to this questionnaire by the Reverend Davison we know that five hundred

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(1) For copy of Questionnaire see appendix B

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## Sections of the Free School.

		Feet.	Inches.	by	Feet.	Inches.			Feet.	Inches.
1	Size of the School.	-	-	57		by 19	13	Height of the First Stool,	-	1 2
2	Size of New Room.	-	-	35		by 14	14	Height of the Last Stool,	-	1 6
3	Size of the Mat Room,	-	-	12	6	by 12	6	15	Width of the Two Sand Tables,	9
4	Height of the School,	-	-	24				16	Width of the remaining Desks,	7 and 7
5	Height of the New Room,	-	-	13				17	Width of all the Stools,	6
6	Height of the Platform,	-	-	2				18	Length of the Tables,	12 6
7	Height of the Desk from the Platform,	3	9					19	Size of the Platform,	6 by
8	Height of the Lesson Rail,	-	4 3					20	Space between the Tables and Stools,	6
9	Ditto,	-	6					21	From Stool to Table,	1 2
10	Diameter of the Alphabet Wheel,	4						22	Space from the Masters Desk to the	3
11	Height of the First Sand Desk,	2							Sand Desk,	- -
12	Height of the Last Desk,	-	2 6					23	Size of the Telegraph,	1 6

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